



YOUR RED RIVER MÉTIS GOVERNMENT'S BI-WEEKLY NEWS.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Your Red River Métis Government recently made an announcement about an advancement in our work to develop 200 megawatts of wind energy for Manitobans, ensuring the availability of long-term energy resources for the province.

Through the Manitoba Affordable Energy Plan, released in September of 2024, Premier Wab Kinew and the Government of Manitoba created an unprecedented opportunity for Indigenous governments to participate in the development of energy resources for Manitoba, allowing for majority ownership of utility scale electricity provided using wind power. It is as an Indigenous government that the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) and our Red River Métis Power Corporation are working toward delivering on the additional wind power the province needs.

Remember, Manitoba Hydro is a Crown Corporation. While Crown Corporations don't operate like government departments, they do exist under governmental oversight. Manitoba's government appoints the board for Manitoba Hydro, and is accountable for reporting on the activity of the Crown Corporation, overseeing it and ensuring its continued strength. It remains a public utility, belonging to the people of Manitoba.

Manitoba's commitment to this public utility model and the public ownership it represents is clear in their plan. Leveraging the existence of strong Indigenous government like your own Red River Métis Government to partner on sustainable energy production is a new concept, and one where we can clearly see the benefits, both to ourselves and to this province we brought into Canada. Not only does it provide us with new opportunities to participate and benefit from equity ownership in the energy sector, it also allows Manitoba to keep rates low and meet the energy needs of Manitobans across the province. In short, it's a win for us, a win for the environment and a win for all Manitobans. This vision aligns with our own culture and tradition of working to the benefit of all, and makes good sense to your Cabinet and myself as your President.

Citizens will recall that we established the Red River Métis Power Corporation in October of 2024

to respond to this opportunity, signalling our intent to develop, operate and hold majority ownership in an alternative energy infrastructure, including wind farms.

Since that time, we have undertaken an intensive and extensive process to select the right partner for our business. We met with more than a dozen different international, well-respected companies who have established their expertise in the development of wind power. We toured a number of wind energy farms, to see how their operations function at the ground level. Realistically, as it relates to knowledge and skills, many of these companies would have been a solid partner for our efforts.

However, we were not simply looking for expertise. Many of the potential partners we looked at had that expertise. However, we wanted a partner who would also understand, honour, and respect that the Red River Métis would remain the majority owners of this initiative. We were looking for a partner who would ensure opportunities for our Red River Métis businesses and help train our Citizens, empowering us to develop our own expertise in the field. We wanted a partner whose values and principles, including environmental stewardship, aligned with ours.

It is for these reasons that our chosen partner is Renewable Energy Systems (RES). RES not only has the technical experience and expertise in the industry, they also displayed a strong willingness to ensure the growth and development of the Red River Métis Power Corporation. We made our commitment to this partnership through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with RES, one of our first acts of 2026.

RES is a company that has its roots in the United Kingdom, beginning in 1981 with a small group of individuals who were researching wind turbines. Its first commercial wind farm came in 1992, providing 6 megawatts of energy, and today remains the second oldest windfarm in the UK. This should give you a sense of how early RES was in entering the wind energy marketplace.

From these beginnings, RES has grown to become the largest independent renewable energy company in the world, active in 24 countries, having already delivered 28,000 megawatts of energy worldwide. While 200 megawatts may seem small in comparison to that number, that amount of energy would power homes in Brandon, Morden, Winkler, Portage la Prairie, Selkirk, Dauphin, Stonewall, The Pas, and Neepawa combined.

With our committed partnership with RES, there are still several steps in Manitoba's wind energy procurement process that we must navigate through. We have already expressed our intent to deliver on 200 megawatts of wind energy, but there is still the Request for Qualified Suppliers process. This process is divided into two parts, with the first part being an initial open request to any who are interested. That part of the process closes on January 23, 2026. You can be confident that your Red River Métis Government's application through the Red River Métis Power Corporation will be there in good order and good time.

From there, Manitoba Hydro will take some time to review the applications, and, in March of 2026, it anticipates issuing the first Requests for Proposals to qualified suppliers. After evaluating these proposals, Manitoba Hydro can choose to select partners and issue a Power Purchase

Agreement. That's when we'll have confirmation of our role in the future of wind energy in Manitoba. If selected, this undertaking will be massive for our government, and will forever change the face of our Nation. This can mean long-term financial security that will allow us to continue offering and even expanding programs and services for our Citizens, while providing a legacy for future generations of Red River Métis.

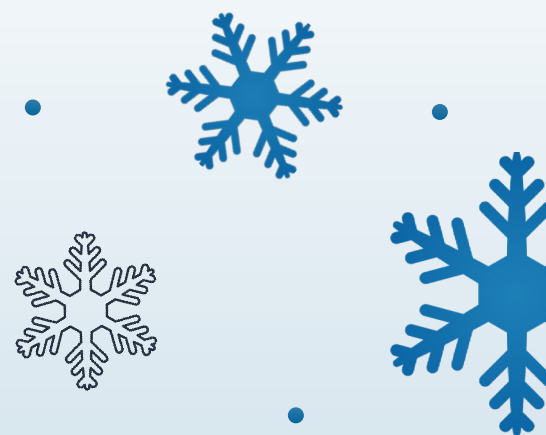
While this may seem like a long process to some Citizens, it's important that each step is undertaken with care and caution. Not only is the engagement of Indigenous government partners in this process a new concept, the expansion into wind energy on this scale is unprecedented in Manitoba. Making sure the right groups are awarded the contracts will go a long way to ensuring timely and efficient delivery of the work. Remember, while your Red River Métis Government is looking to supply 200 megawatts of energy, a total of up to 600 megawatts are available for the right partners to deliver on. 200 megawatts of wind energy is the stated limit for any one wind farm and that's where our focus is for this round. However, it is unlikely we will be the only Indigenous government to invest in the future of wind energy in this province, and we look forward to celebrating not only our own successful proposal, but all successful Indigenous government-led applications.

This initiative is just one piece of a bigger picture that – if we are smart, careful and continue to be as hardworking as our Ancestors – will represent true economic reconciliation. Economic reconciliation requires our active participation and our willingness to put our faith in systems and processes that haven't always been friendly to us. However, if we can't see the potential for the future, and aren't willing to put in the effort to help ourselves, we can't expect to achieve our goals. This philosophy has driven our Cabinet, our staff, and myself as your President to achieve the successes we have to date. As always, I will keep you all up to date on this initiative and others, as we continue to create our own path toward our rightful place in Canada's Confederation.

Until we meet again, I offer my prayers to all our families, Citizens, friends, and neighbours, and my deepest condolences to those who have been caused to grieve. My heart is with the friends, family, and community of our lost loved ones. I ask my people to send prayers to our families and help those who are grieving. I will keep you all in my prayers, as always.

Meeqwetch,

President David Chartrand, LL.D. hon. D.M. ∞



FRESH BEGINNINGS AND STRONG FOUNDATIONS: A LOOK AT THE MMF’S TRANSITIONAL HOUSING AND RAPID SERVICES TEAM



The MMF's Rapid Services team works diligently to ensure the immediate housing needs of Red River Métis Citizens are met on a day-to-day basis.

“Housing for our Citizens has been a critical issue since we were chased off our lands and farms when Canada expanded west,” Will Goodon, MMF Minister of Housing and Property Management, explained. “Today, we see housing needs for so many but those who are most at need, where it’s literally life and death matters, we need to do our very best [to support them].”

Nicole Sanderson, the MMF Housing Department’s Rapid Services Intake Coordinator, has spent the last four years ensuring Red River Métis Citizens have access to culturally focused housing supports.

“I’m the first point of contact,” she said. “So essentially, when someone needs help finding housing and they would like support in that, they would call me, and I would open up a case file for them and then they would get assigned a caseworker within two business days.”

MMF’s Rapid Services team works to prevent and reduce homelessness and remove barriers for the overall well-being of Red River Métis Citizens – encouraging stability, independence, and community. Caseworkers support Citizens by providing access to safe and affordable housing, income and employment opportunities, and education and training. Additionally, participants can develop life skills through coaching, social programs, and culturally relevant activities – connecting them with peers, Elders, and family all while accessing community resources.

Fre Maachi – which is Michif for “fresh beginnings” – has been providing temporary housing for occupants since its inception in 2023. Operating as a second phase transitional housing framework, Fre Maachi offers 16 single occupancy units, four two-bedroom units, and six wheelchair accessible units to both Citizens and non-Métis individuals in

need of long-term supportive housing. The units are designed to help residents gain independence and eventually secure permanent housing.

Joshua Gobin, a caseworker with the Rapid Services team, knows how transitional housing programs like Fre Maachi can make a difference within the community.

“It’s a great step for people who are getting out of shelters or getting out of bad living situations. They come here; we make a case plan with them. We work with them during their stay, help them find housing, and whatever else pertains to their case plan,” he said. “It’s a great place to work on goals before that transition into the public market or subsidized housing.”

Gobin believes that Rapid Services caseworkers and program participants would benefit from privately owned rental companies being more open to providing housing for individuals in need.

“One barrier [is] EIA (Employment and Income Assistance) itself,” he explained. “A lot of people won’t rent to people on EIA. Obviously, that’s illegal, but unfortunately, they’ll receive some sort of reasoning from the landlord or property company as to why they won’t be accepted. A little bit more regulation would definitely be helpful.”

With Indigenous People facing the most difficult housing barriers, Fre Maachi is available to all who need transitional housing.

“Fre Maachi is open to everybody,” said Sanderson. “We’re not a pan-Indigenous organization, but if we do get someone [who’s] non-Métis, we connect them with an appropriate organization that will work with all nations... we always make sure to connect every person with the right guidance.”

Taking a “tailored approach” to their work, Gobin recognizes the importance of being as genuine as possible with participants, noting it as the best way to work within their current circumstances.

“
HOUSING FOR OUR CITIZENS HAS BEEN A CRITICAL ISSUE SINCE WE WERE CHASED OFF OUR LANDS AND FARMS WHEN CANADA EXPANDED WEST. TODAY, WE SEE HOUSING NEEDS FOR SO MANY BUT THOSE WHO ARE MOST AT NEED, WHERE IT’S LITERALLY LIFE AND DEATH MATTERS, WE NEED TO DO OUR VERY BEST [TO SUPPORT THEM]. – WILL GOODON, MMF MINISTER OF HOUSING AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT
”

“When I’m meeting and talking with clients, I’m just trying to talk to them like any other regular individual. I don’t use over-complicated language; I’m not dressed in a suit. I like a very ‘business casual’ approach here, and I think that really helps in developing rapport with people,” he said.

The greatest reward of being a caseworker for Gobin is watching people rebuild their lives – one goal at a time.

“Helping people and seeing their progress and their confidence shoot up, I think, is the most rewarding thing about this job,” he said. “If you see a client start going to school, then get a job, get off EIA – it’s absolutely huge. Their lives have changed tremendously just from those little referrals or small actions you’ve taken to try and help them.”

For Minister Goodon, the impact of Red River Métis housing programs is not measured in homes built or repaired, but in the gratitude of the people whose lives have been changed along the way.

“The gratitude of the families who purchased their first home, or the elderly couple who was able to fix the home they’ve lived in for years, is amazing... when a parent reaches out, [saying] ‘thank you for saving my child’s life’ through our Rapid Services program, [it’s] amazing.”

With the future in mind, the Minister envisions housing programs being offered to Citizens beyond Manitoba’s borders.

“We are doing our best to reach across the province and into Beyond Borders,” he said. “We will be emphasizing to the federal and provincial governments not only the need, which is so apparent, but also our ability to get projects built and ready for our Citizens.”

Curious what supports are offered to Citizens? Visit mmfrapidservices.com to see how the National Government of the Red River Métis is stepping up to meet housing needs.

PLAYING WITH FIRE: THE TALE OF THE DRAGON LADY HOCKEY SCHOOL

Val Johnston is just as fierce off the ice as she is on it!



Val Johnston has spent the last six decades taking her hockey skills across Canada where she has seen her students make it all the way to the National Hockey League.

Sixty years is a long time to do anything, much less coach hockey. For Val Johnston, the time went by in the blink of an eye. As one of the most respected women in her field, the Red River Métis hockey coach has touched the hearts of thousands of players across the Homeland.

Johnston teaches skaters of all ages, and emphasizes that the only requirement is a willingness to learn. Who you are or where you come from does not shape her approach.

“When I get registrations, I don’t ask about their background,” she said. “[I ask] if they’ve got equipment, if they don’t... If they’ve got skates, if they don’t... it’s important. Nothing else. I don’t care if they’re pink with purple polka dots. It’s not important to me because if you’re there to be healthy and if you’re there to learn, to me, that’s all that’s important.”

Johnston’s career has spanned generations, having taught the fathers and grandfathers of her current players. She has also seen many of her students make their way to the National Hockey League or find international success.

“I’ve taught hundreds who ended up at the highest level,” she reminisced.

Prior to receiving her nickname as “The Dragon Lady,” the Citizen was referred to as “Val the Terrible” for the firm coaching style she carries to this day. Her new moniker was given after an intensive training session with the St. John’s Ravenscourt hockey team.

“I walked on the ice and I said, okay, boys, get down on your faces... it’s push-up time... and for every push-up you do, you say, ‘I am not tired. I am not tired.’ Just like in the army,” said Johnston. “[A few days later] the youngest Cadell boy (from the St. John’s Ravenscourt hockey team) comes floating out of the [change] room and he says to me... ‘you’re the Dragon Lady because you breathe fire and you have long red nails.’”

From a young age, Johnston was told by her parents not to focus so much on being liked, but rather, put her energy into being respected.

“Never worry about ‘like.’ The most important thing is that you ask them to respect you, because you can’t take ‘like’ to the bank,” she said. “If they

don’t like you, but they certainly listen, that is a form of respect.”

The Red River Métis hockey coach has applied her life lessons to her work, teaching students that respect can be the most important thing you bring to the ice.

“You don’t have to like the kid you’re standing beside but you’ll darn well work the same way... that’s how I’m asking you to do it,” she said.

Her emphasis on respect also comes from her experiences as a Red River Métis woman in a male-dominated field, but she made her presence known as someone not to be messed with.

“I ignored any of the nonsense that was thrown at me... I basically concentrated on what my job was,” the Citizen explained.

“
NEVER WORRY ABOUT ‘LIKE.’ THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS THAT YOU ASK THEM TO RESPECT YOU, BECAUSE YOU CAN’T TAKE ‘LIKE’ TO THE BANK... IF THEY DON’T LIKE YOU, BUT THEY CERTAINLY LISTEN, THAT IS A FORM OF RESPECT.
– VAL JOHNSTON
”

When she is not teaching hockey, Johnston works with various charities, having raised hundreds of thousands of dollars throughout her lifetime – yet she remains humble about her contributions.

“I’m very quiet about that because to me that almost sounds like you’re asking somebody to give you a big badge for being kind,” she said. “I don’t like that because if you’re giving something to somebody, then you give it to them and you kiss it goodbye. It’s like playing the slots, you don’t expect return.”

Stressing the importance of teamwork both on and off the ice, the coach acknowledged it’s not just one person who can make a difference.

“I may motivate and I may initially help to raise those funds, but it’s not alone,” she said. “There’s nothing anybody does alone. I don’t care how magnificent you are and how many people you can hire.”

Having no plans to slow down, Johnston is determined to pass down the knowledge and encouragement she once received to the Youth she teaches – especially when it comes to innovation and making their own choices – because they are our future.

“All they need is [to be] given the opportunity to make those changes for themselves,” she said. “That’s my only legacy, to try and listen to the younger people.”

If you’re interested in Johnston’s old-school hockey coaching, register with Dragon Lady Hockey School by calling 204-999-6784.

The Manitoba Métis Federation offers a wide range of programs and services for Youth interested in exploring their hobbies, interests, and passions. Visit mmfyouth.ca for more information!

SHOP RED RIVER MÉTIS: MEET CHRIS LECUYER

From learning the trade locally to successfully growing his own business, Chris Lecuyer has made a name for himself with Harvesters, trappers, and taxidermy enthusiasts all over the country.

Tall Tines Taxidermy, which began in 2020, has expanded beyond traditional taxidermy to include services such as fleshing raw hides, tanning, European mounts, and skull whitening. The precision and care provided by Tall Tines Taxidermy go beyond a traditional business model, reflecting their dedication to animal preservation and sustainability.

To learn more about this traditional Red River Métis business, visit talltines.ca and see how you can shop Red River Métis!

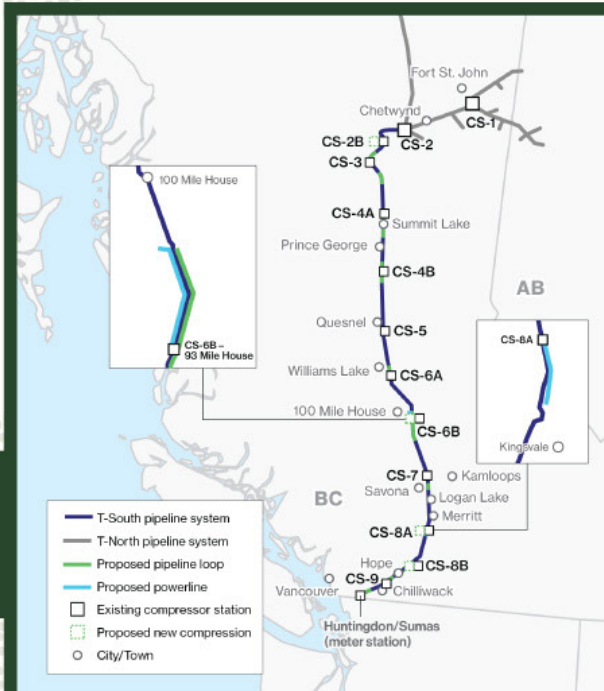
We need **YOUR** Red River Métis Knowledge!

WestCoast Energy Inc. is proposing the Sunrise Expansion Program and the Birch Grove Program. The Sunrise Expansion Program is a 137km expansion of the natural gas T-South portion of the British Columbia Pipeline from Chetwynd to the Canada-United States border near Sumas, British Columbia. The Birch Grove Program is a 32km expansion of the natural gas T-North portion, including the installation and replacement of pipeline segments, piping upgrades, and modifications to compressor stations.



For more information or to schedule a Red River Métis knowledge interview, please contact Jenna Vandebossche at jenna.vandebossche@mmf.mb.ca

**Honoraria and travel may be provided to participants*



Map is for illustrative purposes only and not to scale. Project design is under development and configuration of pipeline loops, compressor units, additional compressor station modifications, and powerlines are subject to change.

Red River Métis **On the Ice** fishing event



Hecla, MB



February 7, 2026



9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.



Red River Métis Citizens

Registration Deadline: January 28, 2026

To register or learn more,
please contact melt@mmf.mb.ca

